



One Hundred Tenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

February 7, 2008

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

In less than a year, a new President will be sworn into office. Because the Department of Homeland Security was created in 2003, the upcoming change in Presidential administration will mark the first time the Department will undergo a Presidential transition.

And while this transition represents a situation of first impression for the Department, one must be mindful that this process will be undertaken in the face of other significant concerns. As the National Intelligence Estimate¹ concluded “the U.S. Homeland will face a persistent and evolving terrorist threat over the next three years.” These factors, taken together represent a unique challenge this agency.

Thus, in furtherance of this Committee’s primary oversight jurisdiction over the Department of Homeland Security, it is my duty to examine the Department’s ongoing transition process to ensure a seamless and orderly changover.

Planning to implement this critical transition process cannot be handled as if it were a routine exercise. As you know, in the event of an incident of national significance during the early days of a new administration, poor transition planning can put the security of our nation, the well-being of our people and the functioning of our commercial sectors at risk. As you recognized in a recent interview, “it is in the transition period, when people are doing the handoff, that there is a natural degree of confusion, which creates an invitation to people to carry out terrorist attacks or other damaging enterprises.”² If proper resource assessments and policy reviews are not available for the incoming administrators to review, this confusion could well lead to an ineffective response and exacerbate an already unfortunate situation. Without appropriate planning and a comprehensive assessment of the successes and failures within each component, a future administration will be ill-prepared to evaluate the Department and its programs during a crisis.

¹ *The Terrorist Threat to the U.S. Homeland*, National Intelligence Council, July 2007

² Stephen Barr, “Homeland Security Prepares for Its First Transition,” *Washington Post*, Jan. 21, 2008.

I have regularly discussed with you my concerns about the Department's numerous personnel vacancies. In addition to my repeated requests to fill executive level non-political career civil service positions, you may also recall the "To Do" list that I transmitted to the Department in September 2007, which mentioned the importance of planning for the mass exodus of political appointees that will occur during the transition. This exodus is likely to have a major impact on the day-to-day operations of the Department due to the Department's disproportionately large number of political appointees.

In recent weeks, press accounts have raised the specter that some political appointees will be or have been converted into positions formerly occupied by non-political career civil servants. I am sure that you would agree that it would be inappropriate to fill career non-political executive level positions with political appointees absent an open and fully competitive process. While I understand that some could argue that these individuals may be well-qualified and can provide continuity during a transition period, others could well argue that to permit political appointees to occupy non-political positions could be viewed by some as an attempt to insulate political appointees from the vagaries of the political appointment system and provide an internal obstruction to the policies of a new administration. Clearly, the latter interpretation is deeply troubling.

Thus, I am seeking your assurance that within the next 60 days, you will issue a policy directive to prohibit the "burrowing in" of political appointees into non-political career positions within the Department.

Because I look forward to working with you to ensure that the next administration receives a comprehensive transition package from each component within the Department, I am attaching a copy of the questions that will be sent to the head of each of the Department's components seeking information about the transition plans in each of the Department's components. I ask for your commitment in ensuring that this Committee will receive timely answers to these questions.

But in addition to the questions to the components, I am seeking the following information from you:

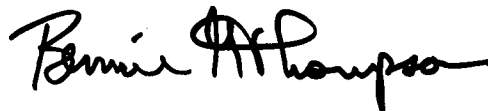
1. Contact information for the individual/s responsible for the transition process at the Department. Please indicate whether these individuals are government employees or contractors.
2. Contact information for the individuals comprising the transition team managed by Acting Deputy Secretary Paul Schneider.
3. Budget information for the transition process.
4. A list of tasks associated with the transition plan and a timeline for completing all tasks.

5. A copy of the draft or final version of the Department's transition plan. If no version exists, please provide a timeline for completion.
6. The management directive or regulation describing the hiring process for political appointees in career positions.
7. A list of former political appointees who have since transitioned into career positions as of January 1, 2007.
8. A copy of the "color-coded chart" kept by Acting Deputy Secretary Schneider that contains a list of positions filled with career officials. This chart is described in the January 11, 2008 Wall Street Journal article entitled, "Homeland Security Handoff – Career Employees Move into Positions Once Held by Political Appointees."
9. Any documents or briefing materials prepared for the "summits" that will be led by Acting Deputy Secretary Schneider.
10. A list of leadership conferences and crisis drills that the transition team will be attending or coordinating in the upcoming year.
11. A listing of any and all contractors or private entities that are or have been involved in the transition process along with a narrative explanation of the role played by each entity.

In acknowledging the importance of the transition in a recent interview, you stated "we should not let ourselves drop the ball on the handoff."³ I look forward to working with you to make certain that no fumbles occur during the transition process. I believe it is our duty to provide the people of this nation with a comprehensive playbook that will not only lead to a successful transition but will chart the course toward freedom from fear.

Please ensure that the Department's responses are received by the Committee no later than February 15, 2008. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Cherri Branson, Chief Oversight Counsel at (202) 226-2616. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance in this critical endeavor.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson

Enclosure(s):

³ Siobahn Gorman, "Homeland Security Handoff -- Career Employees Move Into Positions Once Held By Political Appointees," *Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 11, 2008.

Committee on Homeland Security
Requested Transition Plan Information

1. Contact information for the individual/s responsible for the transition process within your directorate. Please indicate whether these individuals are government employees or contractors, and if they are government employees, whether they are political appointees or career civil servants.
2. An itemized budget for the transition team.
3. A list of tasks associated with the transition plan and a timeline for completing all tasks.
4. A copy of the draft or final version of your directorate's transition plan. If no version exists, please provide a timeline for completion.
5. For fiscal years 2007, 2008, and 2009, a comprehensive list of staffing numbers, including a comparison of the number of FTEs assigned versus the number of actual "on board" employees and a listing of the ratio of FTEs to contractors. Please include pay plan and appointment type.
6. A description of the major programmatic accomplishments of FY 2007 and FY 2008 for your entity.
7. A description of your goals for FY 2009 and FY 2010.
8. Any documents or briefing materials prepared for the Department Transition Team managed by Acting Deputy Secretary Paul Schneider.
9. A list and description of any new positions you anticipate creating that you believe will facilitate a smooth transition (*e.g.*, the recently created Deputy Under Secretary for Management), as well as the plan and criteria for filling any such new position.
10. A priority list of action items that your successors may want to address at the outset of the new administration; a detailed explanation of why each item is being prioritized in this way; what actions you recommend be taken for each item; and a contact list that includes the names and contact information for persons within your office, at other Federal agencies, and in the State, local, tribal, and private sector communities who you have worked with who are familiar with each action item."
11. A listing of contracts with a total dollar value in excess of \$100 million that are expected to carry over through the transition. This information shall be itemized by contractor, project, and dollar amounts obligated.



One Hundred Tenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2008

The Honorable Paul A. Schneider
Under Secretary for Management
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Under Secretary Schneider:

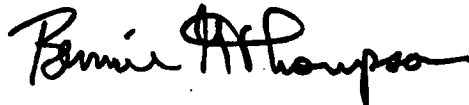
In less than a year, a new president will be sworn into office. Because the Department of Homeland Security was created during the current administration, 2009 will mark the first time the Department will undergo a presidential transition. As the Department's primary oversight committee in the House of Representatives, the Homeland Security Committee is examining the ongoing transition process to ensure a seamless changeover next year. I appreciate your assistance in our preparations. Please provide the Committee with the following information:

1. Contact information for the individual/s responsible for the transition process within the directorate. Please indicate whether these individuals are government employees or contractors, and if they are government employees, whether they are political appointees or career civil servants.
2. An itemized budget for the transition team.
3. A list of tasks associated with the transition plan and a timeline for completing all tasks.
4. A copy of the draft or final version of your office's transition plan. If no version exists, please provide a timeline for completion.
5. For fiscal years 2007, 2008, and 2009, a comprehensive list of staffing numbers, including a comparison of the number of FTEs assigned versus the number of actual "on board" employees and a listing of the ratio of FTEs to contractors. Please include pay plan and appointment type.
6. A description of the major programmatic accomplishments of FY 2007 and FY 2008 for your entity.

7. A description of your goals for FY 2009 and FY 2010.
8. Any documents or briefing materials prepared for the Department Transition Team managed by Acting Deputy Secretary Paul Schneider.
9. A list and description of any new positions you anticipate creating that you believe will facilitate a smooth transition (e.g., the recently created Deputy Under Secretary for Management), as well as the plan and criteria for filling any such new position.
10. A priority list of action items that your successors may want to address at the outset of the new administration; a detailed explanation of why each item is being prioritized in this way; what actions you recommend be taken for each item; and a contact list that includes the names and contact information for persons within your office, at other Federal agencies, and in the State, local, tribal, and private sector communities who you have worked with who are familiar with each action item.
11. A listing of contracts with a total dollar value in excess of \$100 million that are expected to carry over through the transition. This information shall be itemized by contractor, project, and dollar amounts obligated.

I look forward to working with you on this critical endeavor. Please ensure that your responses are received by the Committee no later than March 1, 2008. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance in this critical endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bennie G. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "B" and "T".

Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman

The following were recipients of Chairman Thompson's February 8, 2008 letter requesting transition-related materials:

Admiral Thad W. Allen Commandant United States Coast Guard 2100 Second Street, S.W. Washington, DC 20593	The Honorable Emilio T. Gonzalez Director United States Citizenship and Immigration Services U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528
The Honorable Charles Allen Under Secretary for Intelligence & Analysis U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528	The Honorable Kip Hawley Assistant Secretary Administrator Transportation Security Administration 601 South 12th Street Arlington, VA 22202-4220
The Honorable Stewart A. Baker Assistant Secretary for Policy U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528	The Honorable Robert D. Jamison Under Secretary National Protection and Programs Directorate U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528
The Honorable W. Ralph Basham Commissioner United States Customs and Border Protection 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington, DC 20229	The Honorable Donald H. Kent Jr. Assistant Secretary Office of Legislative Affairs U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528
The Honorable Jay M. Cohen Under Secretary Science and Technology Directorate U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528	The Honorable Prakash I. Khatri Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528
The Honorable Gus P. Coldebella Acting General Counsel U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528	Rear Admiral Daniel B. Lloyd Senior Military Advisor U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528
The Honorable Uttam Dhillon Director Office of Counternarcotics Enforcement U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528	The Honorable Julie L. Myers Assistant Secretary United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Vayl Oxford Director Domestic Nuclear Detection Office U.S. Department of Homeland Washington, DC 20528	The Honorable Paul A. Schneider Under Secretary for Management U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528
The Honorable Connie L. Patrick Director Federal Law Enforcement Training Center 1131 Chapel Crossing Road Glynco, GA 31524	The Honorable Fred L. Schwien Executive Director Director for Operations and Administration U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528
The Honorable R. David Paulison Administrator Federal Emergency Management Agency 500 C Street, S.W. Washington, DC 20427	The Honorable Mark J. Sullivan Director United States Secret Service 950 H Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20223
The Honorable Donald E. Powell Federal Coordinator of Gulf Coast Rebuilding U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528	The Honorable Daniel W. Sutherland Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528
Vice Admiral Roger T. Rufe, Jr. Director Operations Coordinator U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528	The Honorable Hugo Teufel III Chief Privacy Officer U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528
The Honorable Dr. Jeffrey W. Runge Chief Medical Officer Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs and Chief Medical Officer U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20528	



Homeland Security

February 12, 2008

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson:

Thank you for your February 7, 2008 letter requesting information on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) transition plan for the Presidential Administration to occur in 2009. In November 2007, DHS provided a briefing to the Committee on transition planning. I appreciate the dialogue we have had to this point, and I look forward to continuing our communication on this important matter.

Before addressing your specific questions about transition planning, I think it is important to underscore the fact that over 200,000 of our Department's employees are located in the seven major operating Components. The change in administration will have little, if any, impact on their critical front line operations and a fairly negligible effect on senior management for the following reasons:

1. The U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Secret Service have no political appointees.
2. The number two positions in the Transportation Security Administration, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, as well as most of the Component leadership positions are filled by long-term career civil servants.
3. The number three positions in U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and most of the leadership positions within these Components are filled by long-term career civil servants.
4. The operating Components have already experienced a transition in DHS headquarters' leadership when I assumed my position approximately three years ago, and they are very familiar with what they have to do to assure continuity of operations during a change in leadership.
5. There are only 82 political appointee leadership positions in the Department, of which 45 positions are at headquarters. Of the headquarters positions, approximately 50 percent are in the Immediate Office of the Secretary and the Office of Policy. The majority of headquarters offices have career civil servants as the number two official.
6. By law, the Under Secretary for Management is authorized to stay in office until there is a Senate-confirmed political appointee in this position to help ensure a smooth transition.

On the general subject of political appointees, you state that press reports have "raised the specter" that political appointees were being converted into positions formerly occupied by career civil servants. I can assure you the Department does not convert political appointees into career positions without full competition. If a position is to be changed from non-career to career, it is not filled without full and open competition in accordance with all legal requirements. In the last year, there have been four instances where a political appointee has participated in the competitive process and has been selected for a career position. I also respectfully disagree with your suggestion that such employees would be less than fully committed to a new Administration's policies. The employees at DHS are committed to the homeland security mission, not the pursuit of political agendas.

With respect to your request for information on documents and other materials related to transition planning, I assure you that the Department is currently engaged on this important issue at all levels. However, while I appreciate the legitimate role of Congressional oversight, I do not believe it would be appropriate – or even possible at this point – to share material related to this effort. In most cases, the transition planning documents are still under development and, in any event, they constitute Executive Branch materials intended to be shared in the first instance with the incoming Administration. I am open to discussing other ways to accomplish your oversight objectives.

To the extent possible, we have provided transition planning information below in response to your questions.

1. ***Contact information for the individual/s responsible for the transition process at the Department. Please indicate whether these individuals are government employees or contractors.***

Section 341(a)(9)(B) of Title 6, United States Code, vests the Under Secretary for Management (USM) with the responsibility for managing the Department's transition. The transition effort is to be centrally coordinated through the Office of the USM by a core transition team who will lead the effort, with oversight provided by the Deputy Secretary. Since Paul Schneider, the current USM is serving as the Acting Deputy Secretary, the day-to-day transition effort is being managed by the Deputy Under Secretary for Management, Elaine Duke. Ms. Duke is a career civil servant.

2. ***Contact information for the transition team key individuals.***

Acting Deputy Secretary/Under Secretary for Management Paul Schneider
Deputy Under Secretary for Management Elaine Duke

3. ***Budget information for the transition process.***

There is no specific budget allocated for transition. However, Public Law 110-28 appropriated \$900,000 for the Office of the Under Secretary for Management to conduct an independent study with the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) to compare DHS senior career and political staffing levels and senior career training

programs with those of similarly structured Cabinet-level agencies as detailed in House Report 110-107.

The Department of Homeland Security engaged NAPA to conduct this study for \$548,134 and then engaged the Council for Excellence in Government for \$305,127 to help DHS ensure it is prepared to continue operations in the face of leadership changes especially during a change in Administration. The emphasis of the study will be on the Department's homeland security interactions with other agencies such as the Departments of State, Treasury, Energy, Commerce, and Justice. These efforts have been coordinated with the House Appropriations Committee staff.

4. *A list of tasks associated with the transition plan and a timeline for completing all tasks.*

DHS is undertaking a wide range of tasks for transition planning. On August 13, 2007, the President signed an Executive Order putting into place a revised DHS succession order that now reflects the current structure of the Department. In October 2007, DHS completed a succession order and delegation of authority for each senior leadership position (at the Component Head level) within the Department. In addition to Component-level leadership positions, we are also working to identify and plan succession for critical homeland security positions to provide continuity at the time of transition.

DHS is also leading a DHS-focused inter-agency collaboration approach that centers on structured, deliberate processes that engage key groups and individuals to build relationships. The plan is to deliver table top exercises before, during, and after the transition period for career senior officials and incoming appointees. This effort will build DHS employees' knowledge of national security protocols and interfaces with other Departments, as well as State, local, and tribal governments and to ensure DHS employees' preparedness should a natural or man-made crisis arise. The overall transition effort also includes the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC). In January 2008, HSAC delivered a report that identifies transition best practices. These recommendations and others will help DHS develop transition guidance to address the "nuts and bolts" of the Department's operations. Furthermore, the Department is providing improved processes to equip new appointees with the tools they need and the information they require to be effective in their jobs.

5. *A copy of the draft or final version of the Department's transition plan. If no version exists, please provide a timeline for completion*

The transition plan will be made available to the incoming Secretary and Under Secretary for Management by December 1, 2008, as required by the *Homeland Security Act*. Please refer to Section 341(a)(9)(B) of Title 6, United States Code, for the statutorily mandated deadline and purpose. I assure you that DHS is actively engaged in development of this transition plan. However, as I noted above, I do not believe it would be appropriate to

provide the transition plan to the Congress before it is finalized and provided to the incoming Administration.

6. *The management directive or regulation describing the hiring process for political appointees in career positions.*

In response to your specific request for a policy directive prohibiting the "burrowing in" of political appointees into non-political career positions within the Department, I respectfully decline to issue such a directive. The Department is committed to continue hiring dedicated career civil servants in a manner consistent with merit system principles. These principles require that agencies provide a selection process that is fair, open, and based on skills, knowledge, and ability. 5 U.S.C. § 2301(b)(1). Further, we are required by statute to avoid granting any individual a preference or advantage in the application process. In addition to these statutory requirements, agencies must follow the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) regulations in Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations. These regulations outline procedures required for making appointments to career positions, such as providing public notice of the position on USAJOBS and a 14-day open competition period for vacancies in the career Senior Executive Service (SES). 5 C.F.R. 317.501(b)(2). Finally, like every other Executive Branch agency in the Federal Government, we will follow OPM guidance in setting policy for personnel actions.

OPM has oversight authority to ensure all Executive Branch agencies are following the merit system principles and can revoke delegated appointment authority when agencies abuse that authority. In the case of SES positions, OPM reviews the selection process to ensure merit staffing procedures were followed, then OPM forwards the individual's executive qualifications to an OPM-administered Qualifications Review Board (QRB) to certify prior to appointment. During presidential election years, OPM has traditionally required agencies to seek OPM pre-appointment approval for the conversion of non-career (Schedule C and non-career SES) into career positions. During the last presidential election year, OPM issued guidance in March 2004 reminding agencies of the need to ensure personnel actions remain free of all political influence and meet all relevant civil service laws, rules, and regulations. I expect similar guidance to be issued by OPM in March 2008. In the meantime, OPM is already doing an additional informal merit staffing review when the candidate has previously served in a Schedule C, non-career, or Presidentially Appointed, Senate Confirmed appointment.

7. *A list of former political appointees who have since transitioned into career positions as of January 1, 2007*

The Department does not transition political appointees into career positions. Political appointees may, like any other citizen, apply for career civil service positions consistent with the merit system principles. These principles require that agencies provide a selection process that is fair, open, and based on skills, knowledge, and ability. 5 USC 2301(b)(1). Further, we are required by statute to avoid granting any individual a preference or advantage in the application process. In addition to these statutory

requirements, agencies must follow the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) regulations in Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations. These regulations outline procedures required for making appointments to career positions, such as providing public notice of the position on USAJOBS and a 14-day open competition period for vacancies in the career SES. 5 C.F.R. §317.501(b)(2).

8. *A copy of the "color-coded chart" kept by Acting Deputy Secretary Schneider that contains a list of positions with career officials. This chart is described in the January 11, 2008 Wall Street Journal article entitled, "Homeland Security Handoff - Career Employees Move into Positions Once Held by Political Appointees."*

Please see the attached color coded chart. It is an updated version of the chart Acting Deputy Secretary Schneider previously submitted to you.

9. *Any documents or briefing materials prepared for the "summits" that will be led by Acting Deputy Secretary Schneider*

The Department currently plans two conferences. The first leadership conference will be held from February 19-21, 2008, and the second will be in Spring 2008 at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC).

The documents associated with these conferences are still under development. As I noted with respect to the transition planning documents discussed above, I do not believe it would be appropriate to provide these kinds of Executive Branch documents and briefing materials to the Congress before they are complete and are provided to the senior management of the Department at the conferences.

10. *A list of leadership conferences and crisis drills that the transition team will be attending or coordinating in the upcoming year.*

The Department of Homeland Security plans to hold two conferences, as well as briefings and exercises to prepare its senior career officials and appointees for the Presidential Administration transition.

From February 19-21, 2008, DHS is hosting a two and a half day conference that will bring together the Department's top leadership from all Components, including field-based employees. The attendees will be career and non-career employees who will participate in a FEMA exercise, as well as briefings on the Department's major initiatives with a focus on execution in the field. The majority of the attendees will be career employees.

In Spring 2008, the Department will host another 2-3 day event for senior career employees from all DHS Components at FLETC in Georgia. This training will engage senior career employees in a series of briefings and exercises to reinforce integrated operational preparedness and execution throughout the Department.

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In addition, DHS has engaged the Council for Excellence in Government (CEG) to conduct multiple table top exercises before, during, and after the Department's transition. The purpose is to communicate roles, responsibilities, and homeland security protocols to senior career officials and incoming appointees. Through these exercises, these individuals will practice their roles and interact with other decision makers in a variety of emergency scenarios. It will build relationships and camaraderie among key decision makers.

11. *A listing of any and all contractors or private entities that are or have been involved in the transition process along with a narrative explanation of the role played by each entity.*

As discussed above, NAPA and CEG have been contracted to support our effort. Also as indicated above, the Homeland Security Advisory Council performed a task in support of our transition efforts.

The Department of Homeland Security is committed to ensuring operational continuity through the change of Presidential Administrations and I look forward to your continued support as we work to achieve our mission.

Sincerely,



Michael Chertoff

Enclosure

SECRETARY		DEPUTY SECRETARY	
MANAGEMENT Under Secretary	SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY Under Secretary	NATIONAL PROTECTION & PROGRAMS Under Secretary	POLICY Assistant Secretary
Deputy Under Secretary	TRANSITION Director	US VISIT Director	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS Assistant Secretary
Chief Financial Officer	HEALTH AFFAIRS Assistant Secretary / Chief Medical Officer	INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS Under Secretary	OPERATIONS COORDINATION Director
Counterintelligence Officer	Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary	INTELLIGENCE Assistant Deputy Under Secretary	Duty Director
COUNTEINGARGOTICS ENFORCEMENT Director	CIVIL RIGHTS & CIVIL LIBERTIES Officer	CHIEF PRIVACY OFFICER	CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION SERVICES OMBUDSMAN
Chief of Staff	RECOP Deputy Officer	Deputy Chief Privacy Officer	Executive Officer
FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTER Director	DOMESTIC NUCLEAR DETECTION OFFICE Director	U.S. CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION SERVICES Director	U.S. IMMIGRATION & CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT Assistant Secretary
Deputy Director	Deputy Director	Deputy Director	Deputy Assistant Secretary
U.S. CUSTOMS & BORDER PROTECTION Commissioner	U.S. CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION SERVICES Director	U.S. SECRET SERVICE Director	FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY Administrator
Deputy Commissioner	Associate Director	Deputy Director	Associate Deputy Administrator
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION Assistant Secretary / Administrator	U.S. COAST GUARD Commandant	Vice Commandment	

Updated 2/11/2008

*Deputy Secretary*U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528**Homeland
Security**

March 4, 2008

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

03-04-08P04:29 RCVD

Dear Chairman Thompson:

Thank you for your February 8, 2008 letter requesting information on the Department of Homeland Security's transition plan for the 2009 change in Presidential Administration. In November 2007, DHS provided a briefing to the Committee on transition planning. On February 12, 2008, Secretary Chertoff responded to your February 7, 2008 letter on behalf of the Department.

While we appreciate the legitimate role of congressional oversight, I respectfully suggest that providing the information as requested from each Component at this time detracts from our efforts to undertake a unified transition planning process for the next Administration. Further, Section 341(a)(9)(B) of Title 6, United States Code vests me, the Under Secretary for Management (USM), with the responsibility for managing the Department's transition. As DHS is an integrated and transformed Department with one voice, I ask that you accept this response on behalf of 'one DHS.'

Transition planning efforts aimed at ensuring that our Department continues to deliver its vital mission before, during, and after the January 2009 change in Administration have been underway for over a year. A core transition team is leading the transition effort and centrally coordinating the effort through the Office of the USM. Since I am serving as the Acting Deputy Secretary, the day-to-day transition effort is being managed by the Deputy Under Secretary for Management, Elaine Duke, who is a career civil servant.

Many of the requested items in your proposed questionnaire to Components will be prepared by each Component as part of our planning process and will be in place at the proper time. Putting this matter in context, it is important to note that these efforts are being prepared by the Executive Branch for an incoming Administration and, as such, would be inappropriate to send to the Congress in an iterative fashion before it was received by the incoming Administration. We look forward to working with you on the Department's transition efforts and suggest we discuss better ways to accomplish your objectives.

The Department of Homeland Security is committed to ensuring operational continuity through the change of Presidential Administration and looks forward to your continued support as we work to achieve our mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Paul A. Schneider". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Paul A. Schneider